

~~TOP SECRET~~

MEMORANDUM FOR: DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE  
VIA: Deputy Director (Plans)  
SUBJECT: Request for Authorization for Reproduction  
of the Albanian Lek.  
REFERENCE: Memorandum from Finance Division to EE-I  
(OPC), dated 10 October 1951, Subject:  
Albanian Lek.

1. It is requested that authorization be granted for TSS/DDP to reproduce the Albanian Lek for the operational use of OSO and OPC. It is estimated that 1,000,000 Leks will be required to sustain CIA agent teams in Albania during the six-month period beginning 1 May 1952. (1,000,000 Leks is equivalent to approximately \$26,000 at the current artificial exchange rate.)

2. The following alternatives to CIA reproduction of the Lek have been considered and discarded:

a. Use of U.S. currency and/or gold pieces. It is understood that U.S. currency is only negotiable in special state stores where the bearer must make a declaration of its source. Gold is no longer negotiable. Possession of either dollars or gold is considered grounds for suspicion by Albanian security forces.

b. Use of barter items. The exclusive use of barter items presents an insuperable supply problem. Furthermore, such expendable items as our teams have with them are of great value as gifts to potential adherents.

c. Purchase of Leks on the world market. This possibility is treated in the memorandum from Finance Division (enclosure (1)).

3. Because recent extensive efforts to procure genuine Leks in the Mediterranean area have proven fruitless, and because the success of future infiltration missions is dependent on a Lek supply, your consideration of this request in the near future will be very much appreciated.

DOWN GRADE PER  
CLASSIFICATION REVIEW DIVISION  
FOR DDO JAN. 1953

LYMAN B. KIRKPATRICK  
Acting Assistant Director  
for Special Operations

KILBOURNE JOHNSTON  
Assistant Director for  
Policy Coordination

Enclosure

1. Memo from Finance Division

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Enclosure (1)

MEMORANDUM

10 October 1951

TO : EE-1 (OPC)  
Attn: [ ]  
FROM: Finance Division  
SUBJ: Albanian Leke

1. This is to confirm our recent conversations regarding your requirement for Albanian Leke and our inability to procure this currency.

2. Inquiries have been made of all potential sources to obtain up to one half million Leke (\$10,000.00) for your anticipated operational requirements over the next six months. Our sources report the almost complete unavailability of this currency in all money markets. The major factors which would appear to contribute to the scarcity of this currency outside Albania are:

- a. the capital punishment laws prohibiting the export of Leke currency
- b. a complete lack of demand for the Leke outside Albania which would make its illegal export unlikely to be attempted and almost certain to be unprofitable
- c. the very limited commercial traffic between Albania and other countries (other than the USSR and the satellites) would lessen the possibility for successfully smuggling the Leke outside the country for sale or exchange

Planned inquiries aimed at creating a demand for the Leke might stimulate the illegal export of this currency, however, it is unlikely that there would be sufficient quantities resulting from this effort to make the attempt worth while. Certainly this would be a risky venture since the demand would be a very unusual one and could result in our receiving marked or cataloged notes. In any event, notes obtained in this manner could not be considered as sterile and their use in operations would be dangerous.

3. We regret our inability to obtain this currency for you but, as sometimes happens, the currency of a very small, relatively isolated country as Albania, would have hardly any logical reason to be available in large quantities outside the area in which it is native. Where this has happened before, it has been found that the only successful way to obtain a needed currency is to have it acquired by penetration operations. However, in this instance, it is doubtful if even this method would be successful since, we are informed, the usual media of exchange such as gold, U. S. dollars, drugs, tobacco, etc., would be in little demand within Albania.

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[ ] Chief, Monetary [ ]